



**PRESS STATEMENT
BY MARY ROEHRICH, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER,
ACROSS THE AISLE**

Issued at

**A Hopeful Future for the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh: An Alternative Solution
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania
September 13, 2008**

We may face a painful split in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, if on October 4th a majority of the Diocesan Convention votes, to deny accession to the Constitution and Canons of TEC, and to place itself in the Southern Cone province of the Anglican Communion and responsible to its primate. It is important to recognize that even though there are many people on each side of the discussion in this diocese, the split is not caused by any events or beliefs held by individuals here. This schism has arisen from political events and actions outside of the diocese but, of course, the repercussions will be acutely felt here.

Those of us who wish to remain in TEC for whatever reason will have to reorganize the diocesan structures that have been administrated by the Bishop. Most of the people who perform these administrative tasks now will have left with the Bishop, but those who are left will be able to reconstitute the basic structure of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church. There will continue be an Episcopal diocese here and we will go forward with fellowship and mission.

Since the clergy and parishioners reorganizing this diocese have many different points of view on theology, we will have to work hard to connect and find a way of relating to each other that acknowledges our differences and celebrates our common life. The meeting today will present reasons for staying in TEC, a view of what we will need to do, and how we will proceed if the vote passes as expected.

If you're wondering if there would be an Episcopal Church, Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh after the vote, you may rest assured there will be. It will have all the structures

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one expects to find in an Episcopal Diocese: Standing Committee, Board of Trustees, Diocesan Council, a way of performing Episcopal acts, an office, bank account, budget, assessments, convention, districts, and deputies. The beginnings may be a trifle rough but we have the will and the people to proceed. Many of the faces performing these functions will be familiar since we will start with people who have held diocesan office before.

This diocese will not be liberal or conservative. It will have significant numbers of people of all theological stripes. It will welcome those who want to continue in TEC no matter what their position on the split is. It will welcome them now and in the future. This diocese will be the “big tent” church.

Most of us have been in this diocese for many years. It is a sad and tragic thing for us that it may come apart. We have worked and worshiped with those who are leaving. They are friends and fellow parishioners of many years standing. We will mourn the loss of their fellowship. We are enormously saddened by the events that seem about to take place. However, we will take the lemons presented to us by this loss and make lemonade. We will reorganize into a vibrant, committed Diocese that lives the Gospel. We will go forward with grace and courage to find our way through this difficult time and the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church will joyously worship God, follow Jesus, and spread the Gospel in western Pennsylvania.

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